

Diabetes Self-Management: Considerations before Drinking Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages and holiday festivities are a long held tradition. People with diabetes may certainly have an alcoholic beverage if they plan in advance and consider the consequences to their blood sugar control.

Alcohol affects blood sugar. Drinking as little as 2 ounces of alcohol can lower blood sugar very rapidly. When you drink, the liver works to clear this "toxin" from the blood and ignores its role in blood sugar control. If a "low" occurs, the liver won't release needed glucose until it clears the alcohol.

Diabetic problems may worsen. If you have nerve damage from diabetes in your arms or legs, drinking can increase the pain, burning, tingling, and numbness. Alcohol can also increase blood pressure. If you are on a low-calorie meal plan, alcohol counts as extra fats. Lastly, alcohol spurs the liver to make triglycerides, a fat that many people with diabetes fight to control.

Guidelines for avoiding blood sugar lows:

- Talk to your health care provider about including alcohol in your diet.
- Never drink alcohol on an empty stomach.
- Limit yourself to 1 drink if you're a woman or 2 drinks if you are a man.
- Light beer and dry wines have less alcohol and fewer calories.
- Choose mixers like club soda, seltzer or water.
- If you've been drinking, check your blood sugar before you go to sleep.
- Wear your medical I.D. and carry oral glucose tablets or gel with you.
- ***Have a safe and happy holiday season.***

Snack Ideas for Children with Diabetes.

Food accompanies most holiday celebrations. If you include children on your guest list, below are some kid-friendly snacks. These choices are good for children with or without diabetes.

- Sliced apple pieces with peanut butter*.
- Trail mix (assorted dried fruit and nuts).
- Fresh fruit and cheese kabobs.
- Popcorn
- String cheese, or cheese quesadillas.
- Bread sticks and vegetable dip in yogurt.
- Celery sticks with peanut butter* and raisins on top.

*Some children have allergies to nuts. Check with parents before offering a child a snack.



Is it a cold or the flu?

Flu and colds are both respiratory (breathing) infections caused by viruses. The best protection against the flu is to get the vaccine. Other things that you can do to prevent colds and the flu include washing your hands frequently; keeping your distance from others who are ill; and maintaining a healthy lifestyle: get enough sleep, drink plenty of water, limit stress and eat a balanced diet.

Colds usually begin slowly with a scratchy, sore throat, sneezing, a runny nose and perhaps a cough. A mild fever is possible in adults and older children. The flu often begins with a headache, followed by a dry cough, sore throat and runny nose. Fever can be high accompanied with muscle aches and fatigue. The tiredness and cough can last up to 2 weeks or even longer.

You can avoid the flu. Call your local health department to find a flu clinic. Plan to vaccinate yourself and your family today. Stay well.

For additional sites for recipes for people with diabetes:

www.diabetes-recipes.com

www.childrenwithdiabetes.com

www.diabetes.org or call 1-888-diabetes.

More information about preventing the flu

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Office of Immunizations.

www.edcp.org/factsheets/influenza.html .

References:

"Alcohol, driving and illegal drugs".

From www.diabetes.org/for-parent-and-kids/living-with-diabetes/alcohol-driving-drugs.jsp

"Understanding alcohol". Diabetes Forecast. November 2006.

Influenza prevention

"Influenza Factsheet" . From, Epidemiology and Disease Control Program, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

www.edcp.org/factsheets/influenza.html.

January, 2004.

Recipes and meal planning for children with diabetes

www.diabetes-recipes.com

www.childrenwithdiabetes.com

www.diabetes.org



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This educational support tool is a product of the Maryland Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. The intent is to provide information specific to diabetes self-management for the public, especially people with diabetes and their families.

****If you would like to receive this tool each month, please send an email to the author, Daria Rovinski : rovinskid@dhmh.state.md.us**

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